Amendments to the Claims

The current listing of the claims replaces all previous amendments and listings of the claims.

1. - 8 (Canceled)

9. (Original) An optical information medium comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer wherein a recording or reading laser beam enters the information recording layer through the light-transmitting layer,

said light-transmitting layer in an information recording region has a birefringence in absolute value of up to 20 nm at a wavelength of 630 nm and a birefringence distribution breadth of up to 20 nm at a wavelength of 630 nm.

10. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 9 which is to be operated at a linear velocity of at least 8 m/s.

11. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 9 on which recording or reading is performed by a system including an objective lens having a numerical aperture NA and emitting a recording or reading beam having a wavelength of λ wherein $\lambda / NA \leq 780$ nm.

12. (Original) An optical information medium comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer wherein a recording or reading laser beam enters the information recording layer through the light-transmitting layer,

said light-transmitting layer has a surface reflectivity of up to 10% at the wavelength of the recording or reading laser beam.

13. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 12 which is to be operated at a linear velocity of at least 8 m/s.

14. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 12 on which recording or reading is performed by a system including an objective lens having a numerical aperture NA and emitting a recording or reading beam having a wavelength of λ wherein $\lambda / NA \leq 780$ nm.

15. (Original) An optical information medium comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer wherein a recording or reading laser beam enters the information recording layer through the light-transmitting layer,

R/F is up to 10% wherein R is a residual error component of a focus error signal at a linear velocity during recording or reading and F is a peak-to-peak value of a focus sensitivity curve.

16. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 15 which is to be operated at a linear velocity of at least 8 m/s.

17. (Original) The optical information medium of claim 15 on which recording or reading is performed by a system including an objective lens having a numerical aperture NA and emitting a recording or reading beam having a wavelength of λ wherein $\lambda /NA \leq 780$ nm.

18. - 23. (Canceled)

24. (Original) In connection with an optical information medium comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer, wherein said light-transmitting layer has a birefringence in absolute value of up to 20 nm at a wavelength of 630 nm and a birefringence distribution breadth of up to 20 nm at a wavelength of 630 nm,

a recording or reading method wherein recording or reading is performed by passing a recording or reading laser beam to said information recording layer through said light-transmitting layer.

25. (Original) In connection with an optical information medium comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer having a surface reflectivity of up to 10% at a recording or reading wavelength,

a recording or reading method wherein recording or reading is performed by passing a recording or reading laser beam to said information recording layer through said light-transmitting layer.

26. (Original) A method for inspecting optical information media comprising a supporting substrate, an information recording layer thereon, and a light-transmitting layer on the information recording layer wherein a recording or reading laser beam enters the information recording layer through the light-transmitting layer,

said method comprising selecting those optical information media in which R/F is up to 10% wherein R is a residual error component of a focus error signal at a linear velocity during recording or reading and F is a peak-to-peak value of a focus sensitivity curve.